

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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JUDGE ROBERT M. BRUTINEL RECEIVES "JUDGE OF THE YEAR" AWARD FROM NATIONAL ADVOCACY GROUP

Judge Robert M. Brutinel was named National CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)

Judge of the Year by the National CASA Association, for furthering the best interests of children through his significant support of the CASA program. Beyond Judge Brutinel's direct work with CASA volunteers, two other noteworthy accomplishments were cited, including Judge Brutinel's implementation of the Yavapai Best for Babies project and his involvement in the creation of MATForce (a taskforce designed to raise public awareness and responsiveness to the destructive impact of methamphetamine use).

CASA volunteers work with children who have been made wards of the Court due to abuse and/or neglect in their own homes. A major responsibility of the CASA volunteer is to make recommendations to a judge prior to a court hearing as to what is in the best interest of the child. CASA volunteers devote extensive time to meeting with biological parents, relatives and potential adoptive placements.

"Judge Brutinel exemplifies integrity, professionalism, compassion and wisdom when it comes to performing his duties," wrote CASA volunteer Christie Brink of Sedona, in her nomination letter to National CASA. The letter concluded: "It has been largely due to Judge Brutinel that I have so willingly given of my services to the courts for so many years; and I have been honored to work with him and serve in this way."

"I believe that child welfare cases are arguably among the most important matters heard in the Court system. The decisions made have life lasting effects on the children and families involved. This is by no means a simple task. In contrast, the necessary knowledge and skill required are critical. Judge Brutinel proficiently exercises his authority while displaying respect



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and compassion for all parties. His sincere interest and involvement is commendable" wrote Maggie Fega, CASA Coordinator.

"I stand in awe of the many CASA volunteers in Yavapai County who give freely of their time and of their energy to assist the Court," stated Judge Brutinel. "CASAs in this county donate hundreds of hours each year to better the lives of children and families in our community. I know from experience that children in foster care who have a CASA looking out for their interests have far better long-term outcomes than children who don't have a CASA. The CASAs get to know the children in their cases better than anyone, and when they provide input to the Court, I listen. They truly are the child's voice in court. I am honored and grateful beyond words that the dedicated CASA volunteers I work with would consider nominating me as the National CASA Judge of the Year."

Judge Brutinel has been the recipient of numerous previous awards, including the Jacque Steiner Public Leadership Award for Children by the Children's Action Alliance in 2009; Award for Excellence in the Field of Juvenile Law conferred by the Arizona State Bar Association in 2008; the Hope for Arizona's Children Award conferred by Prevent Child Abuse in 2005; and the Spirit of Excellence Award, conferred by the State of Arizona for Family Drug Court treatment programs in 2003.

For more information about the CASA program in Yavapai County, please call the Verde office at 928-554-8900 or the Prescott office at 928-771-3165.

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